

Weed Harvester Update

A typical day on the weed harvester starts at 8 am at the Town Hall and ends at noon to hand in a report to the Lake Manager. The report lists what was cut, where, and what areas of the lake are next likely to need attention. This year, long-time harvesters Bruce Crump and Ed Grunden are joined by newcomer Bill Zibell.

Before harvesting can begin on the lake, annual maintenance must be done to both the harvester and the dump truck that hauls the weeds. Thanks go to Craig Kempel and Walt Christensen on the District Board, who, along with the harvester crew, are diligent about keeping things in good working order. Roger Rude lends a hand as well, in addition to accepting the loads of nutrient rich plants on his fields on Island Road.

Harvesting on the lake is a balancing act that is regulated by the Wisconsin DNR through issuance of a harvester permit. If we cut too many of the weeds, or set the blades too low, the health of the lake's native plants is severely im-



Before weed growth warrants action.



After weed growth warrants action. Bill Zibell pictured.

pacted. Without these natives, water quality declines steeply, and fish habitat is diminished. No habitat, no fish. If you're not an angler, it may seem tempting to harvest more aggressively, in order to clear more space for boating and swimming, but in lakes where this has been tried, harmful algae go unchecked, and the water becomes murky and unsafe. Luckily, the District has the support of members and guidance from the DNR, plus the expertise of its crew, to keep this from happening on Lake Ripley.

Current Resident Or



Ripples
Lake Ripley Management District
N4450 County Rd. A
Cambridge, WI 53523

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Ripples



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WEED HARVEST CREW

Ed Grunden
Bruce Crump
Bill Zibell



FROM THE HELM

As I was driving down Ripley Road on one of the few sunny afternoons in June, I came up on a painted turtle struggling to cross the road to lay her eggs on the other side in the sandy ditch. I stopped the truck and turned on the flashers. Walking up behind her I noticed she had a piece of her shell missing. I was thinking that this turtle just escaped a Northern pike or walleye months earlier. I picked the turtle up and placed it on the other side of the road and while I was walking back to the truck I heard one of the neighbors shout out thank you! I replied sure and gave back a big smile. Over the next few weeks I came across several turtles crossing Ripley Road trying to get to a safe place to lay their eggs and have also seen several that have been run over by drivers that haven't seen this special act of nature in progress. I would ask that all of us be aware of the turtles trying to cross the road and if possible, stop to help them out. If you feel safe, stop your car and take a few minutes out of your busy day to pick her up and bring the turtle to the side of the road it was facing.



The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) 2011 Red List claims 45.2% of all turtle species to be threatened and 29.9% to be endangered or critically endangered. Of the 11 species of turtles in Wisconsin, one is endangered (Ornate Box Turtle), one is threatened (Wood Turtle), and three are of Special Concern (Blanding's Turtle, Smooth Softshell & False Map Turtle).

The turtles provide many great benefits to Lake Ripley and the water shed. Scientists have been unraveling turtle mysteries such as their grand impact on soil formation, maintenance, and functions, as well as their abilities to pose as proficient seed dispersers and germinators for many types of plants. Turtles, like amphibians, are excellent indicators of environmental pollution. Due to their place in the food web, they have the ability to accumulate high levels of toxins such as mercury, lead, DDT, and PCB's in their bodies. Some turtles have been labeled as keystone species in their associated ecosystems. For example, the burrows of the Gopher Tortoise serve as habitat for a plethora of additional species that couldn't live in certain ecosystems without these burrows.

Please visit the Wisconsin turtle conservation program web site <http://wiatri.net/inventory/witurtles/> and help educate the residents driving down Ripley Rd. Jimmy DeGidio, Chair

Turtles of Ripley Road & Preserve



This turtle crossing Ripley Road is the Common Snapping Turtle. This is Wisconsin's largest and heaviest turtle. According to Sam Jonas, Jefferson County's Wildlife biologist, they are both predators and scavengers. The snapper feeds on aquatic animals and plants. They consume almost any animal they can catch, although studies showing that their reputation as a duckling predator has been exaggerated. They also feed on slow-swimming, small fish, or fresh dead fish. Snapping turtles are important top-line predators in our aquatic food chain.

Ancient Wisdom

Turtles come from an ancient lineage reaching all the way back to the time of dinosaurs. More recently, after the glaciers receded some 12,000 years ago, turtles, as well as Woolly Mammoths and Sabre-toothed Tigers, roamed what is now called Wisconsin. One would have to call them a successful species.

Most turtles are omnivorous, eating a wide variety of plants, berries, insects and tiny water creatures. They are beneficial creatures in their habitats.

For the water-dwellers, it is the urge to lay eggs that brings them out of the lake or marsh to find sand warmed by the sun, the perfect incubator for their eggs. Have you noticed that the thoughtful Shore Place folks are sharing their beach with turtle moms? They have constructed flagged "tipis" around each turtle nest. High fives to all involved.

As our cover story suggests, the ancient successes of the creatures has not given them the skills to survive fast-moving vehicles. We can all help by slowing down and by sharing our spaces with these interesting lake residents.



The Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle in the photo on top is likely gauging a rocky shoulder of Ripley Road for its suitability for nesting: These turtles are common but declining. Spiny softshells can be found in large rivers, lakes and reservoirs, especially those with muddy or sandy bottoms. Unlike smooth softshell turtles, spiny softshells are often aggressive when seized, and can inflict painful bites! Both softshell species, especially juveniles and sub-adults, spend significant time buried in the substrate in shallow water, especially at night, to remain hidden. Spiny softshells feed on a variety of animals, including fish, invertebrates, mollusks, and carrion.

The Blanding's Turtle's bright yellow throat is its easiest identification. Like the Box Turtle, the Blanding's bottom shell is hinged, so it can close up to protect its head, legs and tail. Adult Blanding's Turtles have shells approximately 12" long. They prefer "life in the slow lane" - quiet marshy backwaters full of aquatic plants such as the Preserve wetlands and the bays of Lake Ripley.

What Do I Do About a Tree Fall?

Fallen logs and branches provide shelter for fish and wildlife, shade to keep water temperatures cool, basking areas for turtles, perches for birds and underwater surfaces upon which tiny organisms cling. These tiny organisms are then preyed upon by slightly larger zooplankton or invertebrates known as scrapers, who in turn are preyed upon up the food chain. In these ways, tree falls are a fish's best habitat. Treefalls allow a tree to keep on giving after their life on land has ended.

Sometimes this fallen material can create an obstruction to navigation. Before removing such obstructions, there are important ecological and legal points to consider.

Whenever possible, tree falls should remain as part of this natural, ever-changing lake habitat.

Who needs a permit and under what circumstances?

Permits Not Required

Trees and branches that fall due to a natural process may be cut and pulled away from the waterway and floodplain by the affected riparian (shoreland owner), or by another person who has the riparian's approval.

Permits Required

Permits from the DNR are required if the removal of the obstruction would result in the removal of more than two cubic yards of bottom sediment or disrupt bank stability, or If removing the obstruction requires the use of heavy equipment on the bed of the lake.

Removal required

Legal standards require that if a riparian property owner cuts a tree or other vegetation and it falls into the water, it must be removed unless the riparian has a permit to leave it in the water, for the purposes of creating fish or wildlife habitat structures.

Removal not required

If a tree falls due to natural processes, there is no requirement that the landowner remove the tree. Tree falls create such beneficial habitats that they are funded by our cost-share program.

Wisconsin's Public Trust Doctrine

Tradition and law both agree that Wisconsin lakes and rivers are public resources, owned in common by all Wisconsin citizens. The authority by which this tenet stands comes from the state's Public Trust Doctrine. It declares that all navigable waters are "common highways and forever free."

Over time there have been legal challenges to the Public Trust Doctrine. The challenges have resulted in public rights that have broadened to include water quality and quantity, recreational activities, and scenic beauty, in addition to transportation on navigable waters.

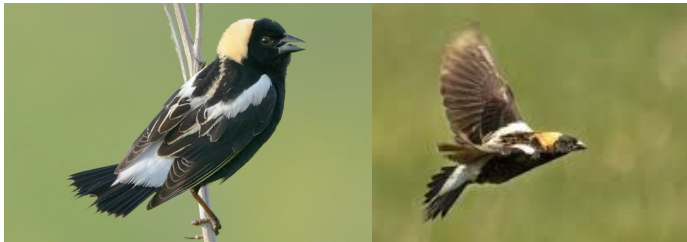


The Department of Natural Resources holds all navigable waters in trust for the people, so that we all have rights to boat, fish, hunt, ice skate and swim on navigable waters, as well as enjoy the pleasure that can come from simply appreciating their beauty.

Wisconsin law recognizes that owners of lands bordering lakes and rivers - "riparian" owners - hold rights in the water next to their property. These riparian rights include the use of the shoreline, reasonable use of the water, and a right to access the water. However, the Wisconsin State Supreme Court has ruled that when conflicts occur between the rights of riparian owners and public rights, the public's rights are primary.

If You Restore It, They Will Come

When a volunteer crew was out working along a fire-break in the Preserve recently, removing Canada thistle and pestering some rogue stands of reed canary grass, we saw a Bobolink. This might not seem noteworthy, just another little bird...but Bobolinks are true prairie songbirds, and they have been in decline in our area since the plow transformed the prairie into farmland in the 1850s!



Bobolinks are small songbirds, mostly black, but the splashes of white seen in flight are the identifying feature. Bobolinks nest on the ground, making them susceptible to roaming dogs, coyotes and foxes. They are seed eaters. Bobolinks have adapted to live in places like abandoned weedy farm fields, but to counter their decline, they need large prairies of 20 – 60 acres. Bobolinks are long-distance migrators, wintering in South America.

And now, once again, there is a prairie here, and the Bobolinks have found it! That is something we stopped to celebrate. You celebrate with us!



At the Lake Preserve, wetlands have been restored in the lowest-lying fields, and they are once again home to frogs, turtles, dragonflies, herons, waterfowl and that singer, the common Yellowthroat, a wetland warbler. The pho-

to of the common Green frog, and the Eastern American Toad, both taken during an inlet creek monitoring, are happy sightings. We have been restoring prairies on the uplands. It takes a lot of work and time to restore a prairie. When the pollinators find it, they help move the work forward. This photo of a monarch caterpillar on milkweed was also taken on the Preserve. And now a Bobolink! What other prairie inhabitants will return, now that the prairie has come home? .

Many Hands Make Light Work

Are you interested in being part of a volunteer crew? We are looking for people of all ages and abilities that may be willing to give one or two hours of time on an occasional basis, to remove invasive weeds from the prairie, woods and wetlands of the Preserve. We will provide training and equipment. Keeping up with the maintenance of the Preserve is best done by a combination of District staff, contracted specialists, and volunteers.



If you are interested in being put on a list of people to call to help out, please call the District office, 608 -423-4537 or email ripley@oaklandtown.com



Monarch butterfly caterpillar on milkweed. Monarchs are important pollinators of many types of wildflowers.

Green frogs are abundant around our lakes and wetlands here and all over WI where lakeshores are mostly undeveloped, which is a good thing because amphibians are a good indicator species for the overall health of our wetlands. Recent studies show that heavy shoreline development significantly reduces populations, primarily because of lost natural shoreline vegetation.



Ripple

For those of you who can't see a new issue of Ripples without thinking of this favorite Grateful Dead song, here it is. For you others, we hope you take a listen soon. With thanks to Robert Hunter, lyricist

If my words did glow with the gold of sunshine
And my tunes were played on the harp unstrung
Would you hear my voice come through the music
Would you hold it near as it were your own?
It's a hand-me-down, the thoughts are broken
Perhaps they're better left unsung
I don't know, don't really care
Let there be songs to fill the air
Ripple in still water
When there is no pebble tossed
Nor wind to blow
Reach out your hand if your cup be empty
If your cup is full may it be again
Let it be known there is a fountain
That was not made by the hands of men
There is a road, no simple highway
Between the dawn and the dark of night
And if you go no one may follow,
That path is for your steps alone.

Ripple in still water,
When there is no pebble tossed,
Nor wind to blow.

You, who choose to lead, must follow
But if you fall you fall alone.
If you should stand then who's to guide you?
If I knew the way I would take you home.



Can you find the toad in this picture?

The trilling call of the Eastern American Toad is often heard just before a good rain. This adaptable amphibian feels at home in gardens, prairies, wetlands and forests.

No Sign of the Signs

Sharp-eyed District residents may have noticed that the beautiful wooden Lake Ripley Preserve sign along County Hwy A, marking our preserve parking lot, has gone missing.

Even more recently, the two handmade wooden signs indicating the boundaries of our watershed, that used to grace an area at the public boat landing and at the intersection of Ripley and Park Roads are missing.

No foul play! They are all getting some much-needed TLC and should be back soon. Thanks to the volunteers who helped to move them, and to those helping to restore them.



Clean Boats, Clean Waters

At the landing on Island Lane, Lake Ripley boaters are helping prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) -- zebra mussels, Eurasian water milfoil, and other plants and animals that don't belong in our lake.

Staff with Lake Ripley Management District are implementing the Clean Boats, Clean Waters program by informing boaters to clean the weeds off boats and trailers, empty bait buckets and live wells, and avoid using live bait in more than one lake.

It's gratifying to see boaters enjoying Lake Ripley. Whether kayaking, skiing, tubing, or just cruising and soaking up sun, boaters report they like the clean water, good fishing, and easy access.

As part of the Lake Improvement Plan update next year, the Lake District is planning an AIS survey in June. At that time we will identify the pervasiveness of known invaders – such as the Eurasian watermilfoil explosion that prompted the forming of the District 30 years ago, to the zebra mussels that likewise came and seem to have died back in what is likely a cyclical pattern. We also want to assess the level of any new AIS, such as one called starry stonewort.

Starry stonewort floats around in small clumps and large mats all over lakes – in the middle, under the piers, on the rocks -- and on boat trailers. It might look like a rooted plant dislodged or cut off by boat motors, but it's actually an algae and floats in the surface. Controls are few, and not very effective. This invasive can form dense mats that interfere with recreation.

To identify starry stonewort, look for a tiny star-shaped bulb on the stem, hence the name. Or simply see it floating in clumps or mats – and your boat trailer, boat motor, fish baskets, and other gear.

A healthy native plant community is likely a best defense to starry stonewort, while it also supports a healthy fishery, and anglers report good fishing for panfish, bass, and northern. Carp are still around, as well.

To keep from spreading invasive plants and animals, boaters need to clean off their gear. Educated boaters on Lake Ripley are on board.

Budget Hearing

August 17, 2019

9 a.m. at Oakland Town Hall

Annual Meeting

Immediately following budget hearing
Oakland Town Hall

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes
- III. Nomination of Board candidates-Two open positions
(Names on Ballot: Jason Hernandez, Deb Kutz, Doug Maurer)
- IV. Chairman's report
- V. Treasurer's report
- VI. Authorization to use unrestricted funds, capital reserves, or other financial strategies to purchase land available that is beneficial to the preservation of Lake Ripley
- VII. Discussion and possible action on other business that can be legally considered by the District
- VIII. Approval of the budget and tax levy
- IX. Tabulation of vote and election of board members
- X. Adjournment

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Immediately following Annual Meeting
Oakland Town Hall

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
- II. Election of Board Officers
- III. Adjournment

Note: Public Comment will be taken at discretion of District Chair

LAKE RIPLEY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
2020 PROPOSED BUDGET

| | 2018 ACTUAL | 2019 BUDGET | 2019 JAN-JUNE ACTUAL | 2019 JAN-DEC ESTIMATED | 2020 BUDGET |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| Revenues: | | | | | |
| Real Estate Tax Levy | \$ 122,916 | \$ 121,471 | \$ 84,408 | \$ 121,471 | \$ 122,715 |
| Grants | 1,381 | | 69 | 4,245 | |
| Interest Income | 607 | | 1,192 | 2,332 | 1,500 |
| Carryover | | 22,891 | | | 30,689 |
| Restricted Funds, Net | <1,501> | | | <7,400> | |
| Authorized use of Unrestricted Funds | | 6,000 | | 6,000 | 4,500 |
| Other | 25 | | 144 | 144 | |
| Total Revenues | 123,428 | 150,362 | 85,813 | 126,792 | 159,404 |
| Projects: | | | | | |
| Various Programs | 2,847 | 1,000 | 0 | 350 | 1,000 |
| Operations: | | | | | |
| Landowner Cost Sharing | 2,754 | 10,000 | 6,453 | 7,528 | 15,000 |
| Weed Harvesting | 7,727 | 10,436 | 741 | 8,861 | 10,550 |
| Preserve Restoration/Management | 9,477 | 15,250 | 7,530 | 9,750 | 6,000 |
| Staff Payroll/ Fringes/Taxes | 61,377 | 62,976 | 33,564 | 64,664 | 71,304 |
| Insurance | 6,595 | 8,300 | 922 | 6,656 | 7,400 |
| Legal Counsel | 607 | 2,800 | 599 | 2,800 | 4,000 |
| Dues & Conferences | 385 | 2,900 | 1,157 | 2,894 | 2,950 |
| Office & Community Outreach | 7,363 | 8,500 | 4,948 | 8,500 | 11,000 |
| Commissioner Stipends | 5,350 | 5,400 | 2,700 | 5,400 | 5,400 |
| Rent | 1,800 | 1,800 | 1,050 | 1,800 | 1,800 |
| Capital Reserve, Land/Equip Acquisition | 15,000 | 15,000 | 0 | 0 | 15,000 |
| Miscellaneous & General Lake Mgmt. | 147 | 6,000 | 549 | 4,417 | 8,000 |
| Total Disbursements | 121,429 | 150,362 | 60,213 | 123,620 | 159,404 |
| Balance | \$ 1,999 | \$ 0 | \$ 25,600 | \$ 3,172 | \$ 0 |

THE LRMD HAS NO INDEBTEDNESS

| | LAKE RIPLEY PROTECTION FUND |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Restricted Funds: | |
| Estimated Balance (12/31/18) | \$ 27,673 |
| Additional 2018 Activity | |
| Increase | 22,719 |
| Decrease | < 9,529> |
| Final Balance (12/31/18) | 40,863 |
| 2019 Estimated Activity | |
| Interest Earned | 457 |
| Increase | 4,245 |
| Decrease | <656> |
| Estimated Balance (12/31/19) | \$ 44,909 |

Please find the agenda for the Budget Hearing and Annual Meeting on Page 4. Anyone wishing to see a detailed budget may come to the District office at the Oakland Town Hall, N4450 Cty Hwy A, Cambridge, during business hours